You Asked

How many books did the LXX have en total, based upon the texts available to Christ and the Apostles?

Gemini 3.5 Flash Extended

The short answer is that if you were to count the distinct texts circulating as part of the Greek Jewish scriptures in the first century, the total would be **between 49 and 53 books**, depending on how certain additions and historical texts are split.

However, the historical reality is a bit more fluid than a simple numbers game, because **the Septuagint (LXX) was not a single, bound book during the time of Christ and the Apostles.**

The technology of the bound book (the codex) was not widely adopted until the 2nd to 4th centuries. In the 1st century AD, the "Septuagint" was a collection of independent leather or papyrus scrolls kept in synagogue library chests. Because there was no centralized authority defining a strict boundary for the Greek collection at that time, there was no official, finalized "total book count."

If we look at the full corpus of Greek religious texts that were available to first-century Jews and early Christians—which were later bound together in the great 4th-century Christian Bibles like Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus—the count breaks down like this:

1. The Proto-Canonical Base (39 Books)

The Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible did not use the consolidated 24-book count. Scribes writing in Greek had already split Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and the Minor Prophets into individual scrolls. This brought the base layer of the Greek scriptures to the familiar **39 books** used in modern Protestant Bibles.

2. The Expanded Greek Corpus (+10 to 14 Books)

Circulating alongside those 39 books in Greek-speaking Jewish communities (the Diaspora) were several books written either directly in Greek or translated from Hebrew/Aramaic originals that did not make it into the final Hebrew canon. These included:

- **Historical & Narrative:** Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, and 4 Maccabees.
- **Wisdom Literature:** The Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus).
- **Prophetic & Additions:** Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Manasseh, and the Psalms of Solomon.

- **Expanded Textual Traditions:** The Greek versions of **Esther** and **Daniel** were significantly longer than their Hebrew counterparts, containing major additions (like the Story of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon in Daniel).

When you combine the 39 base books with these 10 to 14 additional texts and expansions, you reach the **49 to 53** range found in the historic textual stream of the LXX.

What was actually available to the Apostles?

The New Testament writers primarily used the Greek text; roughly 75% to 80% of the Old Testament citations in the New Testament match the phrasing of the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew Masoretic Text.

The Apostles clearly had access to this expanded library. While they frequently quote from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms as formal Scripture ("It is written"), they also demonstrate deep familiarity with the broader Greek corpus. For example, the description of the martyrs' tortures in **Hebrews 11** closely mirrors the accounts in **2 and 4 Maccabees**, and phrases in Paul's epistles frequently echo the **Wisdom of Solomon**. They treated these extra texts as highly valuable religious literature, even if they did not cite them with the same explicit formulas used for the Torah or Isaiah.